

234 *TH& CASTAWAYS OF
THE FLAG*

dition was almost exhausted, and the fire slackened.

Several of the savages crawled up the knoll and got to the hangar* The two carronades fired point blank at them, cleared the ground of a few, and **Fritz**, Jack, Frank, James, and John Block fought hand to hand with the others. Then they retired over the corpses which strewed the foot of the hill. They had used a weapon between axe and club, which, in their hands, was a formidable thing.

Plainly the struggle approached its end. The last cartridges were spent. Numbers must tell M* Zermatt and his party were trying to make a stand around the hangar, which must soon be entered- At grips with several natives, Fritz and Frank and Jack and Harry Gould were in imminent peril of being borne down to the foot of the hill. The fight would be over in a few minutes now, and defeat meant massacre, for they could expect no mercy from these savage foes.

Just at this moment a report rang out off the island, borne by the wind from the north*.

The assailants heard it, for those in advance stopped,

Fritz and Jack and the others at once ran back

towards the hangar, one or two of them
slightly
wounded,

" A gun ! " Frank exclaimed*

And a gun from a ship—or Fm a
Dutchman !"

.boatswain declared*